

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY KALBERT K. YOUNG
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & THE ARTS
HOUSE BILL NO. 2357

February 4, 2012

RELATING TO THE ARTS.

House Bill No. 2357 proposes to amend Section 103-8.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to allow a percentage of the revenue in the Works of Art Special Fund (the "Fund") to be expended for performing arts.

The Department opposes this bill. The use or expenditure of tax-exempt general obligation (GO) bond proceeds is limited to capital expenditures, such as the construction or renovation of State buildings. As such, using the Fund to pay for the presentation of performing arts and their related costs as defined in this bill does not qualify for tax-exempt GO bond financing and could result in an unfavorable effect on the State's bond ratings.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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TESTIMONY OF
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE & THE ARTS
ON
February 4, 2012

H. B. 2357

Chair Wooley and members of the committee, I am Eva Laird Smith, executive director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts (SFCA) and I am pleased to offer testimony on H. B. 2357.

The one percent for art law and the Works of Art Special Fund were authored with the intent that art be part of the architectural plan of the building. These laws were established more than 40 years ago. Hawaii's Art in Public Places Program was the first state agency to have a percent for art law and has long been a model for many public art programs in the country.

That being said, the State Foundation wholeheartedly supports the performing arts as equally important to all art forms. According to the law, we need to observe the proper use of the Special fund with regard to its bond rating. I defer to the opinion of the Department of Budget and Finance with regard to the use of the Special fund to support the performing arts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you.

House Bill 2357

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Honolulu Theatre for Youth would like to respectfully offer our support for House Bill 2357. As a professional theatre company with a 57 year history in the community who annually reaches over 80,000 students, teachers and families across the State we believe that the performing arts are a crucial part of the artistic and intellectual ecology and deserve a place alongside the visual arts in this important piece of progressive legislation.

One of the greatest assets in Hawaii are our unique blend of cultures and people. Local performing arts are a crucial way in which we understand and express this experience and at HTY we have seen first hand how meaningful it is to the community to see themselves, their stories and their cultural practices represented as something vibrant and living. I strongly believe that our parks should be filled with sculpture and our walls with paintings but I also passionately believe the air should be filled with music and chant and that when we build into our communities the resources to gather and dance or tell our own stories we are equally constructing value for the community in which we live.

Separating physical art and performing art as two different mediums does not reflect current thinking for either field. Contemporary visual artists work in a variety of mediums from tangible to conceptual. As warehouses fill with old paintings and the internet changes distribution and collection practices many artists are working in ways that highlight process and community acts of creating art. Performing artists (especially in Hawaii) are often engaged in quite similar acts of community building and reflection and leave a narrative legacy of plays, music and memories that is no less a treasure for our community than a collection of artifacts.

This bill would still give the SFCA the authority to curate, preserve and enhance the artistic vibrancy of our community it simply gives them the flexibility and widens the reach of an important program aiding one of our most precious resources.